

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CCO-00 OTPE-00 EB-11 FCC-03 OC-06 COME-00

DRC-01 /121 W

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R 251825Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4601

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 0862

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC

SUBJECT: KEFLAVIK BASE TELEVISION ISSUE

REF: REYKJAVIK 0860, 0861, AND 823.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: THE KEFLAVIK TV WILL SOON DISAPPEAR
(ABOVE UNDERLINED)

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED ON FRONT PAGE OF
TODAYS SDP NEWSPAPER, ALTHYDUBLADID:

BEGIN QUOTE:

TODAY AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE US ARMY IN KEFLAVIK
AND ICELANDIC PRIME CONTRACTORS IS TO BE SIGNED. THE
AGREEMENT CALLS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MAST FOR THE
ARMY TELEVISION AND A HOUSE FOR ITS OPERATION. WHEN
THIS CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED THE TRANSMISSION OF
THE KEFLAVIK TV WILL BE LIMITED TO THE AIRPORT ITSELF.

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THIS NEWS WAS CONFIRMED BY THE US AMBASSADOR TO

ICELAND MR FREDERICK IRVING IN AN INTERVIEW WITH A JOURNALIST OF THE PAPER YESTERDAY. "THE RISK IS OURS" SAID THE AMBASSADOR WHEN HE WAS ASKED IF THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT WOULD BE CONTINUED ALTHOUGH THE ICELANDIC GOVT LIVED UP TO ITS THREAT OF MAKING THE ARMY LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR NEW EQUIPMENT FOR THE KEFLAVIK STATION IS ON ITS WAY TO THE COUNTRY, SOME OF WHICH IS WAITING ON THE QUAY IN NORFOLK, VA, WHEREAS OTHER IS BEING TRANSPORTED TO NORFOLK FROM SACRAMENTO IN CALIFORNIA. "IT IS NOT TRUE" SAID THE AMBASSADOR "THAT ANY EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN STOPPED IN NORFOLK. IF THERE IS ANY EQUIPMENT THERE IT IS BECAUSE IT IS MORE FEASIBLE TO SEND ALL OF IT AT THE SAME TIME AND THE EQUIPMENT FROM SACRAMENTO HAS NOT COME. THE TRANSPORTATION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE HANDLED BY EIMSKIPAFELAG ISLANDS (ICELANDIC STEAMSHIP COMPANY)."

THE AMBASSADOR WAS ASKED IF THE NEW EQUIPMENT WOULD BE THE BEGINNING OF COLOR TV IN KEFLAVIK. "I CAN ASSURE YOU" SAID THE AMBASSADOR "THAT WE ARE NOT GOING OVER TO COLOR TV. TODAY ALL THE EQUIPMENT IS MADE FOR COLOR TV BUT IT IS UP TO THE BUYER WHETHER HE WANTS TO MAKE USE OF THAT. WE ARE CERTAINLY NOT ABOUT TO START ANY COLOR TRANSMISSION."

IT IS NOT KNOWN WHEN THE PROJECTS OF ICELANDIC PRIME CONTRACTORS ARE TO BE COMPLETED SINCE THE PAPER DID NOT MANAGE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SPOKESMAN OF THAT COMPANY.

AT THE MOMENT THERE ARE TWO SIGNALS FROM THE TELEVISION MAST IN KEFLAVIK, ONE DIRECTED TO THE WEST AND THE OTHER TO THE NORTH, I.E., OVER THE SOUTHWEST PART OF THE COUNTRY. WHEN THE NEW MAST HAS BEEN INSTALLED THE SIGNAL WILL BE DIRECTED TO THE SOUTH, THUS MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN KEFLAVIK AND NJARDVIK TO WATCH THE BASE TV. ON THE OTHER HAND THE RECEPTION CONDITIONS IN HAFNIR WILL BE GREATLY IMPROVED UNLESS THAT AREA IS TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SCREENED WHICH IS DIFFICULT FROM A TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW.

"WE INTEND TO LIMIT THE TRANSMISSION TO THE KEFLAVIK AIRPORT ONLY" SAID THE AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY, "IT IS A PART OF OUR AGREEMENT WITH THE ICELANDIC GOVT."

IN A LATTER CONVERSATION WITH A SPOKESMAN OF THE AMBASSADOR IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE AGREEMENT WHICH IS TO

BE SIGNED TODAY CALLS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING AND A MAST. HOWEVER, ALTHYDUBLADID HAS HEARD THAT THE OLD INFIRMARY AT KEFLAVIK AIRPORT IS TO BE USED FOR THE ARMY TELEVISION AND THAT PREPARATORY WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN.

THIS COMES AS NO GOOD NEWS TO THOSE WHO HAVE INVESTED A FORTUNE IN HAVING TELEVISION SETS AND ANTENNAS ALTERED. AS ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS WE CAN TAKE AN APARTMENT BUILDING IN THE EASTERN PART OF REYKJAVIK WHERE A TV ANTENNA AND A "BOOSTER" WERE INSTALLED LAST WEEK AT THE EXPENSE OF 100,000 KRONUR. THIS BUILDING IS HARDLY UNIQUE IN THIS RESPECT.

ACCORDING TO PEOPLE WHO WORK ON INSTALLING SUCH ANTENNAS AND CHANGING TV SETS IT IS VERY COMMON TO GO TO SUCH EXPENSES. ALTHOUGH IT IS EXPENSIVE FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN APARTMENT BUILDINGS IT IS STILL MORE EXPENSIVE FOR OTHERS. IF A "BOOSTER" IS NEEDED IT COSTS 20,000 KRONUR TO WATCH THE KEFLAVIK TV, BUT IF NO SUCH GADGET IS NEEDED (DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU ARE IN TOWN) ABOUT 7,000 KRONUR. THEN YOU HAVE TO CHANGE THE SET ITSELF TO BE ABLE TO WATCH KEFLAVIK AND ACCORDING TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION THAT COSTS NOT LESS THAN 5,000 KRONUR.

END QUOTE

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2. COMMUNISTS IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN KEEP MAKING TWO CLAIMS RELATING TO THE BASE TV. ONE IS THAT BASE INTENDS

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NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CCO-00 OTPE-00 EB-11 FCC-03 OC-06 COME-00

DRC-01 /121 W

----- 026922

R 251825Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4602
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TO INITIATE COLOR TRANSMISSION. WHEN ASKED WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY DENIED THIS. THE OTHER IS THAT USG WILL RENEGE ON ITS COMMITMENT TO RESTRICT TV SIGNAL. OUR AGREEMENT WITH GOI ON LATTER IS THAT THE SIGNAL WILL BE ELIMINATED FROM REYKJAVIK AREA AS SOON AS TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE. WE HAVE CERTAIN OTHER UNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING TIMING OF LATTER BUT THERE NEVER HAS BEEN ANY DOUBT IN USG OR GOI MINDS THAT WE WILL ULTIMATELY PROCEED WITH PROJECT.

3. YESTERDAY, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY PAPER ALTHYDUBLADID REPORTER CONTACTED AMBASSADOR TO ADVISE HIM THAT PAPER INTENDS TO PRINT STORY THAT IT HAS LEARNED FROM STATESIDE SOURCE THAT AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HAS BLOCKED SHIPMENT OF NEW TV EQUIPMENT TO KEFLAVIK BECAUSE HE WANTS TO AWAIT OUTCOME OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS WITH INTENTION OF REGEING ON AGREEMENTS IF PRESENT GOVT SHOULD LOSE ELECTION. HE STATED THAT EQUIPMENT IS STORED IN NORFOLK WAREHOUSE AT REQUEST OF AMBASADOR. FURTHER, THAT DESPITE OUR DENIALS, WE INTEND TO TRANSMIT COLOR TV THIS SUMMER. WHEN AMBASSADOR PRESSED HIM FOR STATESIDE SOURCE HE CLAIMED IT WAS WASHINGTON POST.
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4. ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN OUR INTENTION TO TRY TO AVOID COMMENT ON THIS ASND ON ANY OTHER ELECTION ISSUE, IT WAS FELT THAT IF WE CONTINUED TO DODGE COMMENT ON THE TV ISSUE IT MIGHT BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO USG BASE RETENTION INTERESTS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, WITH ONLY A FEW DAYS REMAINING BEFORE THE ELECTIONS AND IN THE FACE OF MOUNTING AND FALSE COMMUNIST PROPAGANDS. ON BALANCE IT WAS FELT THAT A REAFFIRMATION OF OUR INTENTION REGARDING THE TV, IF COMPELLED TO DO SO AT THIS TIME, MIGHT EVEN BE BENEFICIAL TO OUR INTERESTS IN REYKJAVIK.

5. AMBASSADOR DENIED ALLEGATIONS OF ALTHYDUBLADID REPORTER AND STATED SIGNAL WILL BE ELIMINATED FROM REYKJAVIK AREA AS SOON AS GROUND CONSTRUCTION FACILITIES ARE COMPLETED WHICH IN TURN IS SCHEDULED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT, AND THAT THE EQUIPMENT WILL BE SHIPPED WHEN NEEDED. AMBASSADOR REITERATED SIGNAL WILL

BE ELIMINATED ONLY FROM REYKJAVIK AREA AND NOT FROM BASE OR SURROUNDING AREA, BUT ARTICLE CHOSE TO IGNORE THIS PART AND INSTEAD INDICATED RESTRICTION SOLELY TO BASE. EXCEPT FOR THIS (AND SIMILAR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF TRANSMISSION ELSEWHERE IN ARTICLE) THE FIRST 4 PARAGRAPHS OF THE ARTICLE ARE FAIRLY ACCURATE. EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE ARTICLE WAS DEVELOPED BY ALTHYDUBLADID ITSELF.

6. COMMENT: ALTHYDUBLADID GENERALLY RUNS NECK AND NECK WITH THE COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER THJODVILJINN IN IRRESPONSIBLE REPORTING. THE SUBJECT ARTICLE, EVEN THOUGH NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE, IS A DEPARTURE FROM ITS NORM. FROM STATEMENTS MADE BY THE REPORTER TO THE AMBASSADOR THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON COLOR TV MOST LIKELY WAS ARMY TIMES (REFTELS). WE ARE NOT AWARE WHAT TH SOURCE REGARDING EQUIPMENT IN THE NORFOLK WAREHOUSE MIGHT BE. WE CANNOT GUAGE ACCURATELY THE REACTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO ELIMINATION OF THE TV SIGNAL FROM REYKJAVIK. OUR INTENTION ON THIS WAS ANNOUNCED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF APRIL AND RECENTLY BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER. ALTHYDUBLADID IS PROBABLY CORRECT WHEN IT STATES MANY SET OWNERS WILL BE UPSET, BUT THE RESENTMENT WILL MOST LIKELY BE AGAINST THE GOI.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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Film Number: D740167-0482
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740616/aaaaamzi.tel
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